



Regulation Number Five

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, February 02, 2009

Last week, the Council spent two and half hours talking about making changes to a 1997 "competition policy." At the prior Council meeting we spent two-plus hours talking about the same topic. That policy is already burdensome and makes it difficult for businesses and/or non-profits to jump through all the hoops to do business with the city. I don't own a business or manage a non-profit, so don't ask me, ask the only two businesses that tried to utilize the policy during the past 12 years, but to no avail.

I believe that all Council members have the right to bring up topics or policies that they are interested in. I think the Council does a good job of remaining civil towards each other so that we do not disrespect our colleagues who have differences of opinion.

Mayor Reed quoted Winnie the Pooh at the start of the discussion: "Before beginning a hunt, it is wise to ask someone what you are looking for before you begin looking for it." The Mayor then asked the Councilmembers who authored a memo seeking changes to the current competition policy what problem is it that they were trying to fix. He asked for one example of something that went wrong that fueled their concerns. No one answered the Mayor's question or gave one example.

I chose that day to not share opinions but rather just ask questions about the 15 additional proposed regulations to the policy. I asked several questions that took up about eight minutes and thanked my colleagues for their patience. The balance of the 2.5 hours was awkward, with back-and-forth about which group should review, when, how long, process, etc...

I want to thank the council members who brought forward the memo. They have opened the door to limiting campaign donations to city council races. In regulation five (out of 15), the proposal is to restrict campaign donations from any company that may provide an outsourced service to the city.

I understand the intent and agree. But why stop there?

The memo brings up the point that there is a connection between political campaign donations and elected officials' decisions. Some people believe there is a direct connection between campaign donations and endorsements to an elected official's voting record on things like contracts, which are covered directly in the competition policy.

Sooo...

Should we ban campaign donations from construction companies that build our community centers and libraries?

Should we ban campaign donations from residential and commercial developers as the Council regulates land use?

Should we ban campaign donations and volunteer time from public sector employee unions as the Council approves wages and benefits?

Should we ban campaign donations from anyone who makes money off city council decisions?

Currently, the only restricted source of campaign funds to San Jose city council races is from Garden City and Bay 101 Card Clubs.

Thank you for opening the door to allowing city council campaigns to one day be free

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